

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Baldomera Pervera Labrador

"Yeah, I can bake. Yeah, but only around in the camp [I sold baked goods]. Because the people, the labor, come back [from work] about half past three. The locomotor, he got station over here, Kōloa. And then, I go over there because people hungry. And no take a bath yet. He sit down over here in the yard; he eat the bodbod."

Born February 26, 1903 in Sibonga, Cebu, Philippines, Baldomera Labrador is the second of five children. Her parents, Juan and Anastacia Pervera, were farmers in Cebu.

In 1921, she married Andres Labrador. The couple arrived on Kaua'i in March 1922. Their first home was in Kōloa's Korean Camp. When Andres became a stable man, the family lived next to the stables not far from the Kōloa Mill.

Baldomera supplemented the family income by selling Filipino baked goods to workers. After World War II, she sold her goods at cockfights on weekends. She stopped doing this in 1979.

Baldomera and Andres sold home-brewed beer to plantation workers. They raised pigs, chickens and vegetables which they also occasionally sold.

She and Andres live today in Kōloa's New Mill Camp.

Tape No. 15-46-1-87

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Baldomera Pervera Labrador (BL)

July 14, 1987

Kōloa, Kaua'i

BY: Chris Planas (CP) and Rose Labrador Wagner (RW)

[Note: BL's husband, Andres Labrador (AL), and daughter, Florence Artiago (FA), were also present at the interview.]

CP: This is an interview with Baldomera Labrador on July 14, 1987 at their home in [New Mill Camp in] Kōloa. The interviewers [are] Chris Planas [and Rose Wagner].

Mrs. Labrador . . .

BL: Yes?

CP: . . . when were you born?

BL: Nineteen hundred three [1903]. February the twenty-sixth.

CP: And where were you born?

BL: Cebu, Sibonga, I live, I born.

CP: What were your parents' names?

BL: Juan [Pervera].

CP: And your mother?

BL: Anastasia.

CP: And how many brothers and sisters did you have?

BL: Me? One sister.

CP: One sister, that's all?

BL: Mm hmm [yes]. And three brother.

CP: Okay. And what did your parents do for a living?

BL: Land. My land.

RW: They had land that they worked on.

BL: Own. My father own.

RW: Like a farm.

CP: Your father owned land?

BL: Mm hmm [yes], mm hmm.

CP: And what kind of things did he do on the farm?

BL: [Raised] corn. Potato.

RW: Sweet potato.

BL: Sweet potato. Banana, papaya.

CP: Any animals? Livestock?

BL: Billy goat. Chicken. And pig. Carabao.

RW: The [water] buffalo.

BL: For make plow my land for my father.

CP: Did you have to help your parents out on the farm?

BL: Mm hmm [yes].

CP: What kind of things do you remember doing on the farm?

BL: You know, my father, he poke line in the land.

RW: She help plant.

BL: Yeah. And then, I put corn, about four. One, two, three, until over there. Because he make over here for line. I put.

CP: Oh, so you plant?

BL: Yeah. And four month, harvesting.

RW: After four months, they harvest.

BL: Harvest. And then, grind.

RW: They grind the corn and then . . .

BL: For make for alive the people. But three brother, he go school. The three.

RW: Oh, they had neighbors, too, that helped.

BL: For help for other.

RW: They help each other.

BL: Because land for the people, land for anyone, everybody who got, own, he company, company for make for the [landowning family] . . .

RW: They help that family. Then when it's their turn, they go and help that family. That's how they did things in those days.

CP: How old were you when you started helping out?

BL: Oh, boy. My mother, she dead. Maybe I don't know, I think five year old, because me, my mother dead.

RW: She don't remember her mother so well.

BL: Me, number two.

RW: Oh, she's the second one, like me, in the family.

CP: Do you know when your mother died?

BL: Me don't know. Me don't know.

RW: She don't remember that.

BL: Because she got the youngest, maybe two days [later] . . .

RW: The youngest was two days old [when BL's mother died].

BL: But every year, my mother give birth. Every year. But me, number two.

CP: Oh, so the youngest one was two days old when your mother died?

BL: Mm hmm [yes].

RW: She committed suicide.

BL: Two days only.

CP: Do you know why?

BL: I don't know.

CP: Don't know why she committed suicide?

BL: No. He [BL's father] no tell nothing. Why she die, oh, I don't know. Maybe she suicide. Oh, I don't know because, you know, hard maybe. Got five children. You don't know, huh, what kind happen.

Me don't know. Because tata, he no explain.

RW: They never talked about those things before.

CP: Your brothers went to school, yeah?

BL: The three go school.

CP: Three brothers?

BL: Yeah. Me and my brother no go school. Me no school.

RW: The oldest two didn't go to school.

BL: Because my father . . .

RW: Needed help.

BL: My brother must help me. I cooking. My brother, three, he go school. I make 'em go school.

RW: The three younger.

CP: What age did you start cooking for the family? How old were you?

BL: Maybe me six or seven start. Because you know, the pot, he put--my father--in the fire. And then, he give for the rice. Not rice, corn. And how for make for the . . .

RW: They used corn instead of rice. They have to . . .

BL: Yeah, put it out.

RW: . . . shake that to get the dust out. And then, they clean it and put it in the . . .

BL: In the pot. And then, he got something for make like that, my father.

RW: She has to watch that.

BL: After he [i.e., pot of corn] no more water, my father said take out [from] the fire because he burn, no can eat. And then, I put cover. That's why, my father, hard, my life.

RW: Because they had to use, you know, that outside.

BL: And morning time, (corn); lunchtime, (corn), afternoon; some more (corn). How many hour he make. No more nothing (rice). No can alive. No can grow.

RW: The rice don't grow there.

BL: My Cebu.

RW: And rice was expensive to buy, so they used corn. They grew up with corn.

CP: What else did you eat? Do you remember anything else that you would cook?

BL: Most vegetable, everything vegetable. And you know the kalamunggay, plenty for my land. I plant. And then, the banana, too. How hard. . . . (BL cries.)

CP: Not too much meat then. No meat?

BL: He get meat, because my own. Because no more money.

RW: Yeah, they had. Nay, what kind meat you folks eat?

BL: Billy goat, pig, and the chicken. Plenty chicken. Suppose I remember for my life . . .

RW: She gets despondent, especially lately.

BL: How many mile, I go walk. How many mile only walk. And put over here on the head. Because no more car, no more nothing. What you going do?

RW: Oh, she took whatever they raised, she put it in a . . .

BL: In the barrio, sa barrio.

RW: . . . basket like and put it on her head and sell it to the town.

BL: Pau school, recess time because I bring fruit.

RW: During recess time in school, she sold guavas and some fruits.

BL: Fruit, peanut. And then, you know, I take for how many mile? I think over here, on Lāwa'i, over here [i.e., the distance BL walked was about the same distance as from Kōloa to Lāwa'i, about three miles], my . . .

RW: She walked.

BL: . . . my town, and the school. And then, I go over there, walk. And big river when I go.

RW: Cross.

BL: Suppose he got heavy rain in the mountain, I go around. And I stay me hear something.

CP: [In] Philippines? How old were you?

BL: Oh, eighteen years [old], I married already. I married, no more three month [later], my husband he said . . .

RW: After they got married, they came here.

BL: Yeah, because no can alive. Suppose got children. More better go Hawai'i, my husband said.

"And what you going do, go Hawai'i? No more money."

He said he got agent for make [trip] for Hawai'i. And near my house, huh? And then, he go.

RW: The recruiters. You understand?

BL: "I go Hawai'i?"

"Yeah. Tomorrow, you go Cebu." Examine, suppose you can pass. Pass, right there.

RW: They came on a ship.

CP: What languages did you speak?

BL: Visayan.

CP: Only Visayan? Nothing . . .

BL: Mm hmm [yes]. No more nothing Ilocano, nothing, nothing. English, nothing, because I no go school.

CP: When you decided to get married, how did you meet your husband?

RW: Oh, that was planned. His mother made them engaged when she was a young girl.

BL: Fifteen. Because the mother teacher for the Catholic [school]. And the mother, she tell me, "Marry for my son."

RW: How do you say that when they supposed to be kept for the son? Made arrangements for their marriage. That was a prearranged marriage.

BL: Propose.

RW: They proposed when she was fifteen.

BL: Propose. The mother, she propose. But my husband, I no see because [he was a] sailor. He go in the boat.

CP: You were married at age fifteen?

BL: No, not yet. Because my age. My age no more eighteen year, against the law. No.

RW: She got married at eighteen.

CP: But then, when you were fifteen, you . . .

BL: No, she propose already, the mother, but my husband, I no meet yet.

RW: You cannot touch those prearranged marriage.

BL: I tell, "I don't know, because my father, he no like for I married." And then, [even when BL was] eighteen already, my father, he no like for I married. He said, "Never mind, no marry. Because nobody take care over here, your brother. Three brother and one sister no married. And what you going do?"

And I said, "Oh, Father, supposing I come old? Nobody like me. Only I work hard."

So my husband, his mother, she said, "Must marry because I like this [girl]." My husband, he no like to me, you know.

RW: He was not ready to get married.

BL: Because the youngest in the family, my husband. "Mama, I no like marry."

They [BL's mother-in-law] said, "Please. You marry that girl because I like that girl." [BL married Andres Labrador on] October 13, [1921]. October, November, December, January, I come Cebu [City].

RW: So she took off as soon as she was about three months in marriage, coming towards Hawai'i.

BL: Because okay already for the doctor. Everything okay. Me and husband married already pau, married, but waiting yet for how many family for go Hawai'i. Must wait for the Manila place. And how many person for come in the boat in the Hong Kong.

RW: They had a quota.

BL: Yeah, quota. And from Cebu. And then, I go Hong Kong, I got sick.

RW: She got ill. So she stayed there for--one month?

BL: No, over. Maybe pau New Year in Manila. Because January is for New Year, huh, because January, and February. January 3, I leave the immigration from Manila. From Manila and Hong Kong.

CP: What year was that?

RW: [Nineteen] twenty-two.

BL: Yeah, '22.

CP: So when you stayed in Hong Kong for one month, did your husband stay with you?

BL: No, in immigration. You know, where I stay, hospital.

RW: She was in the hospital. So he had to visit her in the hospital. He reside in the immigration [station].

BL: My husband stay immigration, live.

RW: When everything was ready, then they started out again.

CP: I'm trying to figure out where you caught the boat.

RW: Cebu [City]. To go to Manila. They went on something like a ferry.

CP: From Cebu?

BL: Yeah.

RW: Then from Manila, they went on a Japanese ship. What the name, the ship?

BL: Taiyō Maru.

RW: Something like that. Taiyō Maru.

CP: And what date did you leave Cebu [for Manila]? Do you remember?

RW: Oktubre? October.

BL: No, not October. December, 1921. [Nineteen] twenty-two about January, from Manila to Hong Kong. The immigration, he no like apply for the one boat [on] New Year['s Day]. Pau New Year, go Hong Kong.

CP: What was that? The immigration. . . .

RW: It was a New Year, so they didn't work. So they waited until after the New Year, then they proceeded. That, I'm not sure, you know, but here in Hawai'i, I more or less can tell you more.

CP: Okay. When you left your family, your father, was he mad at you? Was he angry?

BL: Oh, I no say for my father, I no like because maybe my father, he die. Maybe my father, he die. Suppose I tell, oh, I go . . .

RW: Oh, if she went and asked him, he might have died of shock or despondency. She left without telling them.

CP: Oh, really?

BL: Yeah, no more. But the parents for my husband, they make all same. . .

RW: Farewell party for them.

BL: Farewell. Nobody eat [because they] cry about . . .

RW: Everybody was sad they were leaving.

BL: All, everything, in that one, in my place. Because then, way in the town, my husband. Not in the province. In the town.

RW: Her parents were close to the province.

CP: Oh, I see. But your husband's parents . . .

RW: Was closer to town.

BL: Town. Because my in-law, they chapel Catholic and it's the service for that one. My father-in-law, he stay, he take care [as caretaker and cook]. Take care for that one who . . .

RW: Church.

BL: Church. And take care for the place for cook.

RW: Yeah. He was the chef.

CP: Your husband, did he go to school?

BL: Oh, he go because there is schoolteacher . . .

RW: The mother.

BL: The mother. But English, he no go. No.

RW: Filipino school.

BL: Filipino school. Catholic.

RW: Yeah. And mostly religious.

BL: Me, now, poor thing, no can read. But anything in the home, I can do it.

CP: When you left, did any of your brothers and sisters know you were going to go?

BL: No more nothing. Even . . .

RW: She didn't let them know.

CP: When you came here, did you ever write to them?

RW: Yeah, my father wrote to them.

BL: Most, my mother-in-law. Because my mother-in-law for take care for the baby come out. She [send] to me Filipino medicine so long I no hard time for give birth. And then, no more one week, he coming. He coming, the medicine. He [she] said, "This kind medicine, Andres, the medicine for first time sore stomach, you make 'em drink, your wife."

RW: Herbs.

BL: Yeah, the red envelope. And this white envelope, supposed he give birth and you take for circulate little, it's small. And then, you put with the other, something, and you make over here for the breast, so long the baby every time for drink for the milk no more sick, the baby. Six, my children. Me ninety pound, only. Ninety-nine, until I got operation.

RW: Then she became heavier.

CP: Did you bring these herbs with you from Philippines or did they send them to you?

BL: They send. And right there because July [22, 1922]. My son, the number one, [was born].

CP: When you first came to Hawai'i, where did you go?

BL: Oh, Honolulu, immigration [station].

RW: Then they were put on another ship to come here.

CP: When you first arrived, you came to Honolulu?

BL: Yeah.

CP: How long were you in Honolulu?

BL: One week.

CP: Do you remember anything about being in Honolulu?

BL: No can, because no go out.

CP: Where did you stay at in Honolulu?

BL: You stay in immigration [station]. Close. Everything, big building.

CP: Your daughter mentioned something about coming off the boat?

BL: Who?

CP: About you, when you came off the boat [at Kōloa Landing], that you had an experience with a Hawaiian man? They took you off the boat?

BL: Oh, the landing over here for I [arrive]? And the [large inter-island] boat how too far [from shore] because cannot for come. Only the small [row]boat, he go, he make over there. And then, one Hawaiian talk to me because the boat make like that, make like that.

CP: How? Up and down?

BL: Yeah, up and down. Because, ho, boy, the ocean, how rough. And then, you scared. Hawaiian guy, he stay working in the boat. He like for carry me. He like throw me. "No, no, no. Because I got baby [i.e., BL was pregnant]." But Filipino word. No English.

CP: Oh, so he no understand.

BL: No, me no understand. My husband, he understand, but my husband, he stay carry something. The trunk, he carry.

He said, "Leave my wife over here yet because I take." And then, my husband, he make me, he go slowly because I scared.

I tell, "Oh, bumbai, the baby, he miscarry."

CP: Oh, I see. He almost threw you onto the [small] boat.

BL: Mm hmm, mm hmm [yes]. Because easy, huh, for throw. You know, the boat, he make like that.

RW: Because of the waves.

BL: Yeah, the wave.

RW: That's a skiff, you know, that takes their things out of the big boat.

BL: Because I scared. He [the Hawaiian] said, "Whatcha matter?" Maybe he talk, "Whatcha matter, you scared?"

Because I no understand. I tell, "Oh, I no like because I scared for you hold me. No hold me because you hold me rough."

He make like that, and me, skinny, and oh, how pity. And then, he like throw me out over there on the boat. Because come from all the boat, the big kind boat. Because transfers for the land.

CP: So one week from Honolulu, you come to Kōloa already?

BL: Mm hmm [yes], Kōloa.

CP: And where did you live? Where was your home first?

BL: Over there, in that one, you know, the first house in the Korean Camp, my place.

CP: Was that behind the Big Save?

BL: Oh, no, no, no. You know, the road come over here?

RW: Before you come to Big Save. Closer.

BL: Yeah, close. You know, go Big Save, here, the house? Yeah. Hundred seven, that kind number, but I don't know now.

CP: Wow, you remember the number, huh? Hundred seven?

BL: Yeah, 107.

CP: And how long did you live there at that house?

BL: Seven year, I think, because 1922 I come over here. Twenty-two, twenty-three. . . .

RW: Oh, the three of us were born there [1922, 1924, and 1926].

CP: When you lived over there, what did you do?

BL: Oh, wash clothes for the people.

RW: Had laundry.

BL: Yeah, laundry. Working people, over here, single. Nobody for wash, I take. Because hardly get family. Hardly. All single men. I wash, dollar half [\$1.50], one month.

CP: Dollar half [\$1.50], one month?

BL: Yeah, but must limit the clothes, how many pants you give me. Oh, about two [per worker]. Because sometime, two time, he change for the hapai ko man. You know, for carry cane? He get over here, how dirty, huh? And then get one, two shirt, and one underpants, and two pants. And handkerchief.

RW: Once a week, they change [underpants].

BL: Yeah, once a week.

CP: So every week you wash new clothes?

BL: Yeah. And for make hand. No more washing machine. I go cook 'em in the hot water.

CP: You boil the clothes in the hot water?

BL: Mm hmm, mm hmm [yes].

CP: Then where do you scrub it?

BL: In the tub. My husband, he make me tub. He make the board. And then, (BL makes pounding sounds) I pump that one so long he come out, the dirt.

RW: Paddle.

BL: Sometime, you make like that. You got board, huh, all same here.

RW: Washboard.

CP: You were telling us last time about the first time you came to Kōloa. Your husband was working out in the field, and your husband told you stay in the house.

BL: Oh, why not stay? Stay in the house, wait for my company lady from Philippines. You stay over there about . . .

RW: They had to live like a commune, two families.

BL: Company, yeah. Company.

CP: But did you live in the same house with another family?

BL: Same, yeah. Mm hmm, mm hmm. Yeah, only me and him [her]. And the husband, too. Four altogether. Because no more children. All, no more children.

CP: Oh, I see. But then, when you had children, did they still stay in the house?

BL: No, they separate already for other house. Hard, because only two bedroom.

CP: And you were saying, too, that your husband asked you to take his lunch into the field?

BL: You know, Wednesday come in, our boat, about eight o'clock [p.m.].

RW: They arrived Wednesday. And then . . .

BL: Yeah. Tomorrow [Thursday] morning, he go work. And then, my husband said, "Oh, I like take a bath."

I tell, "Oh, no more watch. I don't know what time now."

He said, "Ah, me, I 'nough sleep."

I tell, "You 'nough sleep, but you don't know what time now."

Then I cook, and then he stay take a bath. I tell, "How come now no more nothing noise? Everybody, he go away." And bumbai, the

locomotor said, "Toot!" Going. No more. You no can work already. I tell, "What you going do?" I cry. "What you going do?"

"Never mind. I work."

"Yeah, because you no go working. Me, I bring for lunch. What you going do? What place I go?"

And then [he said], "Never mind."

And you know, the road, before, maybe field boss, he come or the luna or so-and-so. You ask. I go come up over there, I put over here, the kaukau tin. And then, one German, he come. "Lady."

I tell, oh, Filipino word.

"What you doing over here?"

I tell, "Here." You know, the kaukau tin, my husband.

"You no more nothing lunch, your husband?"

"I don't know what you talking."

He said, "You no remember your husband, what the name?"

"Andres."

"You no remember what number, the bango?"

"Oh, 481."

"How come you remember?"

"Oh, my husband, he give me the number. He said, so-and-so this one in case he got trouble for something, easy for go you in the office. You need this one."

"Lady, come here. Ride the horse."

"No, I no like because I scared who you." Bumbai, he koboy, what you going do? My husband come home, nobody stay. Oh, you know, all single men. I scared.

And then, he said, "Andres? Andres Labrador?" And you know the field boss for haul cane, he said, "Yes, wait because he stay huki yet for the mill. What you want?"

He said, "Here. The wife, she bring [lunch] over here." How pity. I go run quick. I meet him. Because ho, boy, how big people. Big men. Because German, before, all German over here. No more Filipino too much.

CP: The German man, he never understand you?

BL: No, no. He understand because he talk to me. And afterward, he know my house.

RW: He liked her.

BL: Yeah, he said, "No worry. Suppose your husband late because no more watch, you like watch?" Oh, I talk my husband yet. Suppose he like the watch because me no more money for buy watch. Only the chicken for he make "Awk!"

RW: That's the rooster. They went according to the rooster.

CP: Do you remember that man's name?

BL: Mr. Mueller. And my husband's boss in the stable, [William] Kuhlman. German, too.

CP: When you came, were there many other Visayans living around here, too?

BL: Not too much. Not too much Visayan. Only two. Me and my company from Hong Kong, the Visayan. [There were more Visayans living in Korean Camp.] [Nineteen] twenty-four, Camarillo. [Nineteen] twenty-three. He come, the Visaya. And '25, one more family, Visaya. All make. No more, no more alive. Only [Vicente] Bargayo, he come over here 1930 [1929], I think. But he [had to] pay [his way] already. He pay the boat [fare].

RW: They're immigrants.

BL: Immigrant. Ten dollar for one, my husband, yeah, for give. He got anything. The pot, any kind, any kind. So long you come over here. The store boy, he deliver food. But no [pay] nothing. Charge [only]. He no work yet.

RW: They had to buy on. . . .

CP: Credit?

BL: Yeah, credit only. The total, you pay bumbai payday time. No more money, that's the one he make. Everything he get, everything get. Milk, everything, about one month supply. But you pay credit only, that one, because you no work yet.

CP: When your children were born, your first child, second child, and third child, were you very busy taking care of the children?

BL: Why not? Yeah, busy. I wash clothes. I cook for my husband lunch for go work because I make 'em rush because he leave my house four o'clock in the morning.

RW: He had to start early.

BL: Early because he grind the cane. He make prepare early. But the labor, real labor, about five o'clock, he start. Him, overtime, one hour.

CP: So you wake up and you cook?

BL: Mm hmm, mm hmm [yes]. Sometime, the baby pau milk, I give him. Sometime, he cry because I leave him. My husband, I make 'em sleep because how pity, sometime, nine o'clock come back from [work]. And yet, he wash clothes.

RW: That's in the night.

BL: Yeah, [when] I give birth, not so good yet my body. And I cook because my husband, how pity. And he work hard.

CP: When you give birth, who help you?

BL: Oh, one Hapon. One Japanese. She make to me for . . .

RW: A midwife.

BL: One in the camp, Korean Camp, and Filipino Camp, and Spanish Camp, only him [her] for go around because not too much family.

RW: She meant "her."

BL: Yeah. Sako O-ban, that one, the name.

RW: They call her "O-ban." Actually, it's oba-san. But you know, they call 'em "O-ban Sako."

BL: Sako the name. The second [i.e., her last name], I think so.

RW: S-A-K-O. Sako or Sato, Nay?

BL: Sako O-ban.

RW: She said the children are here. But she doesn't---I think she's dead. She has died. She was an elderly person.

BL: Oh, die already, Sako.

RW: Yeah, she was an elderly person. I can remember.

BL: Yeah. She take care about three. Number one, your brother. You, number two. Him. Only three, because over here, I live over here already, New Mill [stables].

CP: Only you Visayan, yeah, not too many others. You had hard time talking to Ilocanos?

BL: Oh, my neighbor, Ilocano, single. Hard time. We don't know. And he come over here, he ask me. I wild, too. Because me don't know and that kind word bad.

RW: See, their wording are very different.

BL: No good.

RW: Kayat word is bad for Visayan.

BL: No good. I tell, "Go home."

RW: What he meant is, he wanted something. But she thought he was leading on to something bad. [In Visayan, kayat is a vulgar term for sexual intercourse; the same term in Ilocano means desire or wish.] And so Mother thought, "Oh, this is a bad man."

BL: "Oh, oh, my husband, he come back," I said. That kind [of] man no good. He like kayat. No talk to me because I no like, you know. I scared. I said, "Go home, go home." I no like that word.

RW: No English at all.

BL: No English. What you going do?

CP: Did you still do laundry after your children were born? Did you still do the laundry for the single men?

BL: Oh, Visayan. No Ilocano.

RW: For the Visayan man.

BL: Yeah, single Ilocano [men], I no like. Because I no can understand. Maybe something, suppose I deliver. All Visayan. Live [i.e., the men came from] Carcar. Live the same, my place. Cebu. Sibonga. Same. But Ilocano, different. Different . . .

RW: Camp. They had different camp.

BL: Yeah. I go Korean Camp.

CP: Were there very many Visayan single men?

BL: Plenty. Plenty because most Visaya before. But he go home [to the Philippines] quick. Pau three year [working in Hawai'i], he go home. He go school. Or I don't know because he got money, plenty money, he take.

CP: Did most of them go home?

BL: Most go home. He no stay, he no stay.

RW: They really actually came to make some money and went home.

BL: Mm hmm, must go home, the Visayan, before. Not for the married kind. Really.

RW: Most married people stayed back.

BL: The single, most, he go back Philippines. So long he got three year for pau the contract. Three year the contract, he go home. He go home Philippines. And then, he come back, he get wife.

RW: Sometimes they came back [to Hawai'i], and then they brought their wives.

CP: I'm going to stop the tape for a minute, okay?

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

BL: You know, when I think of my life, I like cry, you know.

RW: That's when no good. Because when you remember, that's when you come sad. You must remember only the happy.

BL: But no can help. Nothing for I cry because for remember that one. Suppose no more nothing to tell for my life. I happy. I no like go back to story for my life because hard.

CP: Was it better that you came to Hawai'i?

BL: Mm hmm, mm hmm [yes]. My children, how too good. But now, Philippine, what you going do now? Suppose I stay my children over there, Philippine? That's why, my husband, he said, "More better go Hawai'i because us no more nothing children yet." In case, because, you know, the land before I stay, no more nothing.

RW: They couldn't produce back. It was overused. It wouldn't grow.

BL: Anytime, plant, plant, plant. Corn, corn, corn. No more medicine [i.e., fertilizer.] What you going do?

RW: They didn't give [the land] time to rest.

BL: I go vacation Philippine. Pity, my place. No more nothing corn, no more nothing. All stone.

RW: It's barren now. Became stone.

CP: When did you go back to the Philippines?

BL: Nineteen sixty-two, I go back.

CP: Did you see your relatives? Brothers and sisters?

BL: No, me no more sister.

RW: No sister. She died early.

BL: Brother. Only two brother. No sister.

RW: Two brothers left.

BL: But now, only one. The youngest is still [alive]. You like look for when my husband, he retire? He got picture.

CP: I'd like to see some of those. Your daughter, she told me that one of the ways you made money was to bake?

BL: Yeah. And then, I take care for chicken. For fight chicken. Because before, no more nothing for law for crook. No, no. All equal before. No bother policeman before. Leave alone the people because, you know, Filipino must fight chicken. You know, the boss before, Manji, Kapa'a place.

CP: Oh, what his name?

BL: Manji. My boss fight chicken in Kapa'a [ca. 1970s]. And all over here, around, Manji. Japanese. Big shot.

CP: Oh, what was he? Was he a plantation worker?

RW: They all retired at the age of sixty-five.

RW: (RW shows photo album.) This is [Vicente] Amoroso. This is Agustin Bromeo.

CP: When you were talking about the chicken fights, can you tell me a little bit more about what you did?

BL: Oh, me, don't know about what kind fight chicken because me not gamble. No, only I see. Me, only lady no gamble. Some lady gamble, gamble, gamble until no more nothing for take care because stay in the mind, the gamble. Not me.

CP: How were you involved in the chicken fights?

BL: Me?

RW: No, she sold. Strictly sold her wares.

BL: Yeah. Got license. You know, for around, government. Must get license. Report every three months.

CP: Oh. License to sell . . .

BL: Wholesale groceries.

RW: No, not groceries. Your baked goods.

FA: Vending, what would that be?

RW: Vending, no. Peddling her wares.

BL: Only he call groceries, that one, the license. Because anyplace, I go sell.

CP: But actually you sold baked goods?

RW: The word is "G-R-O-S-S." The license.

CP: Oh, I see. Gross license.

RW: Yeah, that's her gross license. But see, to her, grocery is the same. But I was the one that reported. And I could read, so it's G-R-O-S-S. Gross license.

CP: Okay. What kind of things did you bake?

BL: Oh, any kind. Got potato. Potato, sweet potato.

RW: And the banana.

BL: Banana, and the mochiko, mochi. And that one. Sometime I go sell chicken, the rice. But I give up because . . .

RW: Too much work.

BL: . . . too much work. Bring plate, any kind.

CP: Did you make cakes?

BL: Yeah. That's the one, most.

RW: Sometime boiled eggs, but most times, cakes.

BL: Yeah, boil egg, coffee.

RW: And 'ōkolehao, Nay?

BL: Oh, I scared.

RW: Oh, no, you had sell.

BL: Oh, oh. No, beer.

RW: Yeah, yeah. I was telling him about the beer, too, that we sell.

BL: Yeah, he make, my husband, beer, somebody . . .

CP: Oh, your husband made beer, too?

BL: But the detective, Honolulu, he come.

RW: Bootleg, in other words.

FA: Yeah, bootleg. (Laughs)

BL: He report me because I buy nice kind, every two year, nice kind car. But he no can catch me, though. No can catch . . .

RW: But of course, the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] . . .

FA: Not FBI, detectives.

BL: Detectives, three. Ho, boy, he said, "Open the door," because he got "arrest for about you, Mrs. Labrador." Oh, boy, the policemen, three. I scared. Because how big, from Honolulu. Only one policeman, Lihue.

CP: How did you start making beer?

BL: Oh, somebody, he teach my husband.

RW: Only three years we had [beer] because we were being investigated constantly.

CP: What year was it that your husband learned to make beer?

RW: [Nineteen] thirty-seven?

BL: [Nineteen] thirty-seven or '38.

RW: Yeah, between '37 and '38 because I lied my age for my license.

CP: Can you tell me about that? What did you do to help your husband make beer?

BL: Oh, me don't know about that one, for make the beer.

RW: I know they had a crock.

FA: They still have it.

BL: It stay over there.

RW: Big crock we had. But mostly my father could give you more. You ask my father.

BL: You know, the syrup, I don't know . . .

RW: Ma, they call that "malt."

BL: Yeah. And the sugar, too.

RW: That's the one, they had detected us about. Who bought that in quantities?

BL: But plenty Japanese over here, he catch, you know.

RW: They got caught brewing their own.

CP: What would happen to them if they get caught?

BL: Because he go investigation over there. Over there, right there, he take. Omine, the name. Every time, Omine.

CP: Omine? What was he?

BL: Oh, make already.

CP: What did he do?

BL: Oh, he make 'ōkolehao.

RW: He made oke, 'ōkolehao and beer.

BL: Swipe, yeah.

RW: With rice.

CP: Oh, with rice, too?

RW: Yeah.

CP: Okay.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

RW: They were jealous so they reported.

BL: All because me, jealous, they go report.

RW: We were getting money, then. They could not find a thing.

CP: So you just helped to bottle [the beer]. You help put it in bottles?

RW: Yeah, we were all involved. And I served.

CP: Served?

RW: Yeah, we had customers come.

CP: They come over here and buy, too?

RW: Yeah, by the old house.

END OF INTERVIEW

Tape No. 15-52-2-87

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Baldomera Pervera Labrador (BL)

August 11, 1987

Kōloa, Kaua'i

BY: Chris Planas (CP)

[NOTE: Also present at the interview is BL's husband, Andres Labrador (AL).]

CP: This is an interview with Baldomera Labrador at her home in Kōloa on August 11, 1987. The interviewer's name is Chris Planas.

The last time I was here, we were talking about the different side businesses you had to make money. You used to bake goods.

BL: Oh, yeah. I make baked goods from Philippine Islands. Before, I small, about twelve year old, thirteen, fourteen, and fifteen, until I married, and then I come over here. Because eighteen year old for I married.

CP: So, you learned to bake in the Philippines?

BL: Mm hmm [yes], mm hmm. Only Philippines. I no learn over here because I know already. I make business over here already I come.

CP: How did you learn to bake in the Philippines? Who taught you?

BL: Nobody. Only I try. Suppose I look my auntie for make, because, you know, my auntie, I live [with] because we no more mother.

CP: Oh, you lived with your auntie?

BL: Mm hmm [yes].

CP: And you watched her bake?

BL: I watch him [her].

CP: What kinds of things did you learn to bake?

BL: Oh, make out of (sweet) rice. We put in the banana leaf and put coconut juice.

CP: What do you call that?

BL: Bodbod.

CP: What other things did you learn to make?

BL: The bibingka. The banana, fry, call 'em maruya. And then, potato, sweet. Call 'em bikobiko (shredded sweet potato mixed with flour and sugar, deep fried).

CP: When you first came to Hawai'i, did you start to bake and sell things?

BL: Oh, yeah. Because I no give birth yet. I give birth, the first boy, 1922 July, I cannot sell. Before I got baby yet, [BL sold baked goods]. And then, I give birth July; I come over here, March, April, May, June, July--five month, hah? And then, you no can bake something because you stay in the bed.

CP: Up until that time, you baked things and you tried to sell?

BL: Why not? Yeah, I can bake. Yeah, but only around in the camp. Because the people, the labor, come back [from work] about half past three [3:30 p.m.]. The locomotor, he got station over here, Kōloa. And then, I go over there because people hungry. And no take a bath yet. He sit down over here in the yard; he eat the bodbod.

CP: So you go meet the train?

BL: No. I no meet the train because bumbai I get hurt. Because he jump, jump, the people in the wagon. Yeah, because he like in a hurry. I wait in the house.

CP: At your house?

BL: No, no, the people, he no come house because tired. I go over there.

CP: Okay. So you go to each of these people's house . . .

BL: Yeah, because he got the big kind, the all same apartment. One room, one room, one room [i.e., bachelors' quarters]. Big, I think, about five, no, he put in one apartment?

AL: More.

BL: More, no? Korean Camp, I live over there. And next, Japanese Camp. And next, Filipino Camp down there. On the other side, Spanish Camp.

CP: Which camp do you go to, to sell?

BL: Oh, my camp, Korean Camp because Filipino, Filipino. I no like for the Japanese.

CP: But you don't go over there [Japanese Camp] to sell?

BL: Ah, no. Because him, other nationality.

[A] Hapon, he kick to me. Because I go sell in the camp. And the Hapon, businessman, because they got the store. And then, pile all everything, collector. Because stay waiting for the people come back for come from the work because payday. Kukui'ula, McBryde Camp, number three, payday. Number three the day, the month, payday. That's why, I go [sell] because payday, huh? And he [Japanese businessman] said, "Mrs. Labrador."

I tell, "Yes?"

"You make money, huh?"

I tell, "Why not?"

"You got license?"

"For what you find out? You not policeman. You make money. Me, no more nothing because you store. You come over here for collection. You no more nothing food, no more groceries, you bring. But me (chuckles)."

He report. That's the one [he reported], I got kitchen [to bake goods for sale].

CP: Which man was this?

BL: Make, all make, the Hapon. He jealous.

AL: No more in Kaua'i yet, I don't know. No more Filipino business over there in Kaua'i yet.

BL: No more nothing, only Japanese.

AL: In the camp, just only carry the basket and go around plantation.

BL: Same. Because the people, I know, huh? Make, payday time, make plenty because I [sell] so-and-so [to] this one, [he owes] so-and-so amount. I tell, oh, suppose I can do, okay. Because not plenty, because only myself and I got children, too.

And then, [ca. 1937-39], I go [sell] in the Kapāia place, Līhu'e. Go down, you know the Wilcox [Memorial] Hospital? That's the one, he build up. He close the [cockfighting] business because he no like. The doctor got notice no good because he yell too much. Who win, he yell and the sick men, he said, no good. That's the one, he stop.

CP: These people, they were ones who ran the cockfights?

AL: We get the license [to sell]. Until we stop the . . .

BL: The wartime, 1941. Because no more supply for gasoline.

AL: We wen stop [selling] for little while [between 1941 and 1946].

BL: I cannot continue for sell because blackout.

AL: Wartime, eh?

BL: Wartime, 1941.

CP: So you cannot bake . . .

BL: Mm hmm [yes]. That's why I stopped. Return the license. Every three month, I go file for the license.

CP: After World War II [started], you stopped?

AL: No, stop little while.

BL: Oh, stop little while [1941-46], but I no stop [BL continued selling baked goods at cockfights from 1946 until 1979]. Nineteen seventy-nine, I stop. Yeah, '79 because Kapa'a close because the owner, he [had a] stroke. And plenty for go over there for gamble, the syndicate. He go over there, take 'em. You know, [from] Maui, Hilo, Moloka'i, and especially Honolulu, he come over here for gamble. You know, the money, how many thousand you and me, your chicken, about \$5,000 your money. That's the one, got trouble. Lucky, no more nothing shooting, shooting. That's why, I give up. That's why, I tell, "I no like sell no more."

CP: Too dangerous?

BL: Yeah. Because I go Kekaha, he got nothing. No more nothing protection. Because anyhow, me, I no catch because I got license. Yeah? But broke, the game.

CP: Now, when you became pregnant and had babies, you couldn't bake?

BL: Oh, no, no. I no bake. I get operation. Me, young, no baby. Twenty-nine, my age, no more baby [BL had to stop having children]. After I make, easy for find money. Yeah, no bother. Because Florence [born in 1932], the youngest, only four pounds, that one. The doctor, he tell, "No give birth no more because you no more hundred pound and you hard work."

That's why, I tell, "Oh, up to you."

My husband, he said, "I no like for my wife for make operation no give birth because bumbai [something might go] wrong."

And he said, "No, I find doctor, smart doctor. The army doctor."

And then, I [pay] fifteen dollars. Because before, no pay for go [plantation doctor], but he pay for the outside doctor.

CP: So after you had Florence, then you couldn't have babies anymore?

BL: No more nothing after twenty-nine. Only twenty-nine, my age.

AL: Yeah, from that year. What year, we stop 'em?

BL: The baby? Nineteen thirty-two.

CP: So, you sold your baked goods house to house?

BL: Yeah. Oh, chicken fight, I no sell house for house. Because Saturday and Sunday.

CP: Oh, okay. On weekdays you went to house to house. And Saturday, Sunday, you went to the chicken fights?

BL: Chicken fight. I no like [sell in] the camp because he go in there for fight chicken Saturday and Sunday.

CP: And both Saturday and Sunday, you went to Kapa'a?

BL: Oh, Kapa'a every time, Saturday and Sunday. Before I come over here, no more car. Nothing, nothing car.

CP: When you used to go sell these places, how did you get there? Did you drive?

BL: Oh, no. Me, don't know. Him.

CP: [To AL:] Oh, you drive the truck?

BL: Oh, good driver. Ho, boy. Even the mill, he drive yet. Him.

AL: Yeah, and no pension yet, that time. She going find somebody for drive.

BL: Oh, Sunday, because he take care the stable.

AL: Yeah, Saturday.

BL: But sometime, he bring me over there and I pity me. Because suppose he broke the game, what you going do? Only me stay here. Somebody, I tell, "Please, you take me [home]?"

"What about your husband? What place he find you?"

I tell, "Because he don't know what place the fight chicken."

He go in the mountain. Ay, what time he come back, my husband? And lucky, quick come back. Yeah, quick come back. Pau time for the mill, come back over there in the fight chicken.

CP: Oh, sometimes they broke up the chicken fight, and then you'd get [stranded].

BL: No. July, August, September. November, start again. November, December, January, February, March, April, May. Little bit, little bit no more, seven month. Because they stay change the feather. No more fight chicken.

CP: So, on Sundays, would he drive you or did you have somebody else drive you?

BL: No, suppose Sunday, me don't know suppose what place the game he go run, I find for driver over there, the single. Rose [Wagner, BL's daughter], she drive.

CP: Rose drove, too?

AL: Before, single, yet. Still young.

BL: Poor thing.

AL: Only little while, she working for the mother.

CP: How old was she when she drove?

BL: Only ten year old, she stay drive already because good body, that kind girl and nice, how healthy. She play baseball, she play any kind. [BL may be mistaken about exact age her daughter began driving. But it is true that her daughter was underage when she first got her license.]

AL: But for find out only for ten. Oh, somebody wen report. They catch 'em.

BL: Catch 'em, we go court. Me, and my (chuckles) husband, and my daughter. You know, see, Miss [Carrick H. Buck], the judge [Kaua'i Circuit Court judge].

CP: Rose [Wagner] told me about this.

BL: She true.

CP: She was driving, but she was still too young to drive, right?

AL: Yeah, they catch 'em. They take away the license. Got suspended until she reach the age.

BL: 'Cause any kind. Bike, horse, all same, that girl. Boy, no can find that kind girl, I tell you true. Good body and the mouth . . .

AL: You got the picture. You can show him the picture. Shee, boy, you don't know how, the time, she got eleven or twelve. You don't know about--you think twenty.

CP: She helped you with going to sell things?

BL: Yeah, she helped not so long. Because she drive. How can for young? She married.

CP: But she helped you go house to house, too, before?

BL: Ah, no. She no like. No, particular. Only good for action for the boy. She like everybody. Everybody, because friendly.

AL: Too lovely. Even myself, father, well, I forget. I thought she was 'nough age the time for get license.

CP: Oh, you forgot. You didn't know she was still too young.

AL: Yeah.

BL: Because I scared. I tell my husband, "More better take license because, ho, boy, good driver."

AL: Good driver.

BL: Good driver. And how many time she run candidate for Rizal Day? She win, oh, boy.

CP: What about your sons? Did your sons help you, too?

AL: Oh, the slow.

BL: Slow, the oldest.

AL: Him, he no like own car, yeah? But the young sister, oh, boy . . .

BL: The number two, this number two, this. But no more accident, nothing. Boy . . .

AL: No need take lesson.

BL: . . . I tell sometime, oh, please, no run because my hand, I make like that in the outside [as if holding tightly to the car]. This one over, you know, the mile.

"No scared."

"Boy, the car."

CP: So, she learned to drive faster than the older brother, then?

AL: Oh, ho, ho. Him, the oldest. Him [Her], the second, but him [her]

the first one, he [she] handle car. (Rose Wagner was the only one that drove.)

CP: Did your children help you a lot?

BL: Ah, all help, all help. All the three boys stay with me.

AL: That one [Rose Wagner], only little while.

BL: Little while, because (she) marry. Quick marry.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

CP: There was something else, I remember, you were mentioning the last time about making beer?

BL: Yeah, making beer, but, oh, I no like that kind because somebody, maybe he report me because the policeman, he come over here from Honolulu.

CP: Now, how did you make it?

BL: I don't know. My husband, because not so long.

AL: Oh, that easy for make, that. Even the liquor.

CP: Your daughter Rose, she was telling me that the bachelors, they came to your house to buy.

BL: Oh, that's true. Yeah.

CP: Was that when you were living by the stables?

BL: Mm hmm [yes], mm hmm.

CP: Did you have them come inside your yard or inside the house?

BL: Oh, sometimes, he bring.

AL: I get one jar for make over there, about twenty-four bottles at one time. Put 'em over there and mix up the syrup, sugar, and the. . . . What they call that? They make 'em about there?

CP: Then Rose [Wagner] told me she helped to serve the men, yeah?

BL: Oh, why not, hmm?

CP: How old was she at that time?

AL: Oh, she young yet.

BL: Maybe eleven.

CP: Eleven years old?

AL: Eleven, twelve.

CP: But she looked older?

AL: Mm hmm [yes].

CP: Then the people, they came to buy beer and stay in the house to drink?

AL: Mm hmm.

BL: Yeah.

AL: Some, in the ground, because they got big yard, the stable.

BL: In the stable, big yard. But not in the kitchen. In the outside, in the veranda, because big, that one, the house.

AL: Oh, some, they pay; some, they charge. But we lucky if they pay, or not pay, we no care.

BL: Yeah. Because the chicken [fighting cocks] more . . .

AL: I no find trouble there because only me, I stay. Single house, no more neighbor.

CP: You folks, when they come over, do you stay with them, you entertain them, or you just leave them go and they drink on their own?

BL: I tell them, "You fella, all same [age as the] father. Suppose you fall in love for my daughter, too bad. Because you old, me don't know suppose you got wife Philippines. I no like for you stick around over here, please." Yeah. And me, too good for them. That's why, good, he no more nothing trouble. Good, me good. I go in the fight chicken and sometime, late come home, huh? Because for the car, traffic. No more trouble, nothing. Only trouble, the license from before for Rose. Terrible trouble, something, no, no, no. Because I be careful. So long against for the court, I no like. That's why, I tell, I no like for make money for against for the law. I no like.

CP: Did you have other things around the house to make money?

BL: Oh, chicken. From Mainland, the rooster and that one, the . . .

AL: The hen.

BL: The hen.

CP: Any other kinds of animals?

BL: The pig.

CP: How many pigs did you have?

BL: Oh, sometime five, sometime six.

CP: Did you raise them and then sell them?

BL: Yeah, in the store. Sueoka Store. But how cheap. Sometime only ten dollar. You know, the small kind, only one dollar.

AL: Three dollar.

BL: And then, he put that one, in the truck. He go around in the camp who like for the pig, small pig, for take care.

AL: Yeah. Before we kill, we go around . . .

BL: Hard life, no? He said, yeah, ho, boy, how shame. I no like. You know one Okinawa come from Lawa'i. He yell. He said, "Who like the pig?"

That's why, I tell, "Ah, please, you make 'em stop the man. What kind he sell?"

He said, "Oh, alive pig."

I tell my husband, "Oh, more better buy pig."

My husband said, "What place he put 'em?"

"Ah, you get plenty lumber over there." And I put in the kitchen yet because he got kitchen for left over, I put in the small pig, two.

He said, "Yeah, okay. I make little bit over here, the small kind pigpen."

And then, he put 'em over there. And then, ready for give birth, that's why I tell, "No sell because bumbai he [she] got the baby come out, for make party, this, the pig."

And he said, "Mrs. Labrador, you got pig, huh, over there?" Because he notice yesterday.

"Yeah, yeah, get."

"Come from?"

"One Okinawa, he come over here for sell for small kind pig."

He said, "How many?"

"Two."

Bumbai, the man, he around over here, I tell him for bring again for small kind pig. Sure, all my life, before, hard time.

CP: Then you raised pigs, too?

BL: Oh, raise pig, because I stay at the stable already. In the Korean Camp, I rest but how near. All same, over here. Him, he make for small kind house.

CP: And what did you feed the pigs?

AL: Barley. That time, pick some grass outside.

BL: Yeah, the pig grass. And he put in the head.

CP: You put on the head?

BL: Oh, what you going do? No more nothing car.

CP: Oh, you'd carry it on your head?

BL: Him. Come home time, pau work. Lunchtime, he pick up the grass. And then pau hana time, he get the bag, he put over here. He put something, over here in the back.

CP: Your children, did they help to pick grass, too?

BL: Oh, more worse, he pick up . . .

AL: Oh, they come big already.

BL: He pick up, the kid. He come big. But my husband, he go pick. Sunday, suppose he no work, but he work sometime Sunday.

CP: And you grew vegetables, too?

BL: Oh, boy. The number one. Over here, number one.

CP: Oh, yeah?

BL: Corn. I sold.

AL: The whole thing, that. Corn, and peanuts . . .

CP: Peanut, too?

AL: . . . vegetables.

BL: Bean. String bean.

AL: She had to go every week. Every week, I going sell about eighty dollar, sixty dollar. The corn, thirty or forty. Every week. Every week, that.

BL: Because they buy it, huh, for plant. Suppose you harvest other place, other place, other place.

AL: All plain. No more other kind vegetable, all for make money.

BL: And then . . .

CP: So what did you do with the money that you made from all these things, all the food you sold and the beer and everything?

BL: No, I keep 'em. Look now. Look now, all my children, he got share. See? What about over here, the people over here, he die? No more nothing, the children. Yeah. Ho, boy, I keep the money.

AL: We save.

END OF INTERVIEW

**KŌLOA:
An Oral History
of a
Kaua'i Community**

VOLUME I

**Center for Oral History
Social Science Research Institute
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa**

SEPTEMBER 1988